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GRANT GROVE

Kings Canyon National Park

California

INTRODUCTION

Within the relatively small Grant Grove area is a richness of nature and scenery best found by hiking the area's numerous trails. Although these trails do not afford access to the extensive wilderness backcountry of Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks, they will enable you to find solitude and natural, seemingly remote settings within a few minutes walk from your vehicle. Streams, rocks, flowers, great trees, and, for alert observers, birds and other animals will provide many hours of pleasant and healthful enjoyment for casual walkers. More ambitious hikers will find ample trail mileage requiring many days to explore. Only the major trails are described here. There are additional trails, many of which interconnect, making it possible to vary several of the suggested routes.

Elevations range from below 5400 feet to over 7500 feet. Hiking boots are the preferred footwear. However, sturdy tennis shoes are satisfactory on most trails. A small first aid kit, sunburn lotion, and insect repellent may be useful. Although there are small streams in the area, they must not be depended upon for pure drinking water, so carry your own.

Trails shown in color on the map correspond with the descriptions here. Occasionally, you will see colored, metal triangles along the trails. These symbols mark winter ski routes and are located high in the trees so as to be visible above the deep winter snow.

As long as you stay on trails, hiking by yourself can be both safe and enjoyable. If, however, you would like to learn more about Grant Grove and its resources, the National Park Service invites you to join one of the frequent ranger-guided walks in the area. Presented daily during the peak summer months, and on weekends throughout the entire year, ranger-conducted activities are the best way to discover what Grant Grove is all about. Consult the park newspaper, *THE SEQUOIA BARK*, for schedules.

For your safety and for the protection of the park's features, we ask that you observe a small number of common-sense rules:

1. Please stay on trails — taking shortcuts can be dangerous to you and damaging to the trail.
2. Children should not be allowed to hike without responsible supervision.
3. Dogs, and all other pets, are prohibited on all park trails.
4. Park trails are closed to all wheeled vehicles, including bicycles and trail bikes.
5. Smoking is not permitted while traveling on park trails. If you must smoke, stop and do it safely.
6. ~~The Grant Grove area is closed to overnight camping.~~
7. Carry out all litter — film wrappers, plastic bags, pull-tabs, everything!
8. And most importantly, all park features — flowers, trees, rocks, wildlife — must be left undisturbed. Let the next visitor find the park in as good a condition as you did!

Additional interesting experiences can be yours once you have explored the trails described in the leaflet. Check with a ranger at the visitor center for other possibilities, such as Redwood Canyon or the Converse Basin.

MANZANITA TRAIL PARK RIDGE

Distance: Round trip 3.3 miles

Time: Round trip 2 hours

Climb: 800 feet

Type of Walk: Moderate

Trail Characteristics: First portion in forest, steep in places. Remainder easy uphill grade.

The trail begins at the far end of the visitor center parking area, adjacent to the lodge buildings. Behind the tent cabins, the trail connects with and follows a dirt road for .2 mile, then leaves the right side of the road and heads uphill. Stay right at the next two junctions. A few hundred yards past the junction with Round Meadow Trail, the trail traverses Manzanita Hill. Manzanita, a shrub easily identified by its smooth, red bark and roundish, thick leaves, bears a small apple-like berry, hence the Spanish name which means little apple.

At the top of Park Ridge you may return by taking the Azalea Trail, which meets a tributary of Sequoia Creek a short way downhill. The creek provides a moist habitat for countless azalea bushes covered in late June and early July with a myriad of fragrant, cream-colored flowers.

Continue down the main trail along the creek until it joins the connector trail to the South Boundary near the south entrance road to Wilsonia. Cross the Wilsonia road and follow the trail back to the visitor center.

**PARK RIDGE TRAIL
PANORAMIC POINT AND FIRE TOWER**

Distance: Round trip 4.7 miles
Time: Round trip 3 hours
Climb: 200 feet

Type of Walk: Easy
Trail Characteristics: Along Park Ridge, scenic vistas, fire lookout

This trail starts at the Panoramic Point parking area and goes south along the ridge. Panoramic Point, a quarter mile hike from the parking area, provides an excellent view of the valleys and high mountain peaks to the east of Grant Grove. Interpretive displays name the many mountains and valleys, giving an overall perspective of Kings Canyon National Park. Visible in the foreground is Hume Lake in Sequoia National Forest. Just beyond the low ridge behind the lake lies Kings Canyon. Formed by the South Fork of the Kings River and modified by glaciers, the upper canyon has been compared to Yosemite Valley.

Continuing along the trail, one may look west down into the San Joaquin Valley, and on a clear day see the Coast Range 100 miles away. At the junction of the road and trail, follow the road to the left for about 50 yards. The trail then continues along the ridge until it meets the road .1 mile from the fire lookout. The tower is operated during the fire season, normally May through October. Please obtain permission from the person on duty before ascending the tower.

To return, retrace your path along the trail or follow the dirt fire road back to your car.

**DEAD GIANT LOOP TRAIL
DEAD GIANT AND SEQUOIA LAKE OVERLOOK**

Distance: Round trip 2.2 miles
Time: Round trip 1.5 hours
Climb: 400 feet (return trip)

Type of Walk: Easy
Trail Characteristics: 1.6 miles on old road, .6 mile loop foot trail; Forest, lake view and canyon vista

The trail starts at the extreme end of the Grant Tree parking area and proceeds downhill along an old road for about a mile through a forest of sequoia, fir and pine. The road is closed to vehicles except for fire control purposes. Stay to the left on the road and continue past two trail junctions until you pass a meadow on your right. Just beyond the meadow, a trail to the right leads a short distance to the Dead Giant.

The Dead Giant is an unusually large sequoia which shows signs of man-caused death. Looking closely, you will find axe marks girdling the tree, severing the cambium layer. With the living layer cut, nutrients could no longer move up the tree and the giant died.

Follow the trail beyond the Dead Giant to the ridge and proceed to your left to Sequoia Lake Overlook. From this point, there is a good view of Sequoia Lake and the surrounding area. The lake, now the location of several YMCA camps, was initially constructed around 1890 as a millpond to supply water for a flume to carry lumber to Sanger in the San Joaquin Valley below. Notice the black oaks which inhabit the lower slope. Acorns from these trees were a valuable food source for the local Indians and now provide mast for deer, bears, and many smaller animals.

To follow around the loop, walk a short distance back up the ridge and take the return trail to your right. To the left from this ridge, you can see lower Kings Canyon. The ridge in the middle distance shows the effects of the McGee Fire of 1955. The fire burned over 13,000 acres of forest and threatened the Grant Grove area. Follow the trail back to the road, turn left and retrace your steps to the parking lot.

**SUNSET TRAIL
VIOLA FALLS, ELLA FALLS, SEQUOIA LAKE**

Distance: Round trip 6 miles
Time: Round trip 3-4 hours (Viola Falls 3 miles)
Climb: 1400 feet (return trip)

Type of Walk: Fairly Strenuous
Trail Characteristics: Forest, rocks, streams, waterfalls

This is a pleasant trail through a sometimes open and varied forest of pines, firs, and oaks. The trail begins across the main highway from the visitor center; use the crosswalk. Take the trail going to the left below the highway, skirting Sunset Campground. The Sunset Trail branches off to the right about a quarter mile or so past the entrance to Sunset Campground, and then winds downhill. In about one and a quarter miles the trail intersects with the trail from Swale Workcenter on the right and the South Boundary Trail on your left. Follow the South Boundary Trail for a quarter mile to Viola Falls.

The falls are impressive in spring and early summer when there is an abundance of water from the snowmelt. Even more fascinating are the sculptured rock pools the stream flows through. Cowparsnips, leopard lillies, and numerous other wildflowers bloom here among the moist streambanks. Also notice the several giant sequoias across the creek.

Ella Falls is about a mile farther down the trail toward Sequoia Lake. A short distance beyond Ella Falls is the park boundary and several summer camps operated by the YMCA at Sequoia Lake. When you reach the paved road, a short walk to the right will bring you to the old park entrance road opposite Camp Redwood. You may return up the trail you just came down, or you could follow the old road up to the General Grant Tree parking area. From there return to the visitor center along the trail that begins near the drinking fountain.

GENERAL GRANT TREE TRAIL

Distance: Round trip .5 mile
Time: Round trip ½ hour
Climb: 30 feet

Type of Walk: Easy, Accessible to the handicapped

This short, self-guided loop trail starts from the Grant Tree parking area one mile from the visitor center. Signs along the trail describe many of the features seen, or you may choose to rent the cassette recorder at the visitor center and listen to a 30-minute discussion about the area and these great trees.

NORTH GROVE LOOP

Distance: Round trip 1.5 miles
Time: 1.5 hours
Climb: 400 feet (return)

Type of Walk: Easy
Trail Characteristics: Along an old road

This pleasant loop trail starts at the extreme end of the lower Grant Tree parking area and follows an old one-way road through a beautiful grove of giant sequoia, sugar pine, white fir, and dogwood. Stay to the *right* at the first junction and follow the unpaved road downhill. Notice when you get to the wet meadow that there are many more sequoias here than on the drier hillsides. These huge trees require a great deal of water daily, and here along the meadow they grow very rapidly.

The old, nearly obscured road at the bottom of the hill is an old fire road that continues to Millwood, the site of a bustling 1890s mill town. The huge sequoias were logged in several locations, taken to the mill, and then the lumber floated down a flume to Sanger in the valley below. The large dead giant sequoia at the road junction shows signs of a fire many years ago. Few of these trees succumbed to fire, being very resistant to heat.

From the old Millwood road junction, continue left uphill to the paved road which will take you to the parking area. Or you might choose to turn right at the paved road, and go downhill one-quarter mile to the Dead Giant Loop Trail.

BIG STUMP TRAIL

Distance: Round trip 1 mile
Time: Round trip 1 hour
Climb: 200 feet (return)

Type of Walk: Easy
Trail Characteristics: Mixed conifer forest

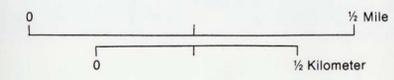
This interesting trail traverses an area that was totally cut over for timber, chiefly the Giant Sequoia, in the late 1880's. The area was added to Kings Canyon National Park in 1965. Because decay occurs slowly in the giant sequoia, most of the evidence left behind by the loggers, i.e., stumps, sawdust piles, etc., has been preserved. A brochure at the trail head, near the Big Stump Picnic area, will help you understand the story. And don't forget the Sawed Tree. The trail begins near the Mark Twain Stump, crosses the road, and climbs a small hill to the tree. The trail continues along the eastern side of the road back to the parking area.

Grant Grove Kings Canyon National Park

Trail descriptions (over)

- Manzanita Trail
 - Park Ridge Trail
 - Dead Giant Loop Trail
 - Sunset Trail
 - General Grant Tree Trail
 - North Grove Loop
 - Big Stump Trail
 - Other trail
 - Major road
 - Road
-
- Ranger station
 - Campground
 - Picnic area
 - Trailer sanitary station
 - Amphitheater
 - Interpretive trail
 - Food service
 - Lodging
 - Grocery store
 - Post office
 - Gas station
 - Stable

Contour interval 80 feet



Sequoia Lake is privately owned property (YMCA), not part of the Park. You are welcome to walk down to the lake, but please do not enter the camp areas. Swimming and fishing are not permitted in the lake.

Wilsonia
Wilsonia is a private community located within the boundary of Kings Canyon National Park. Facilities include food, lodging and grocery store. Limited services available during winter.

To Redwood Mountain, Sequoia National Park, Giant Forest